



BJJ GUIDES

Enter The System: Leg Locks By John Danaher Study Guide



Key Concept



Drill



Detail



Caution



Example



Transition

Volume 1

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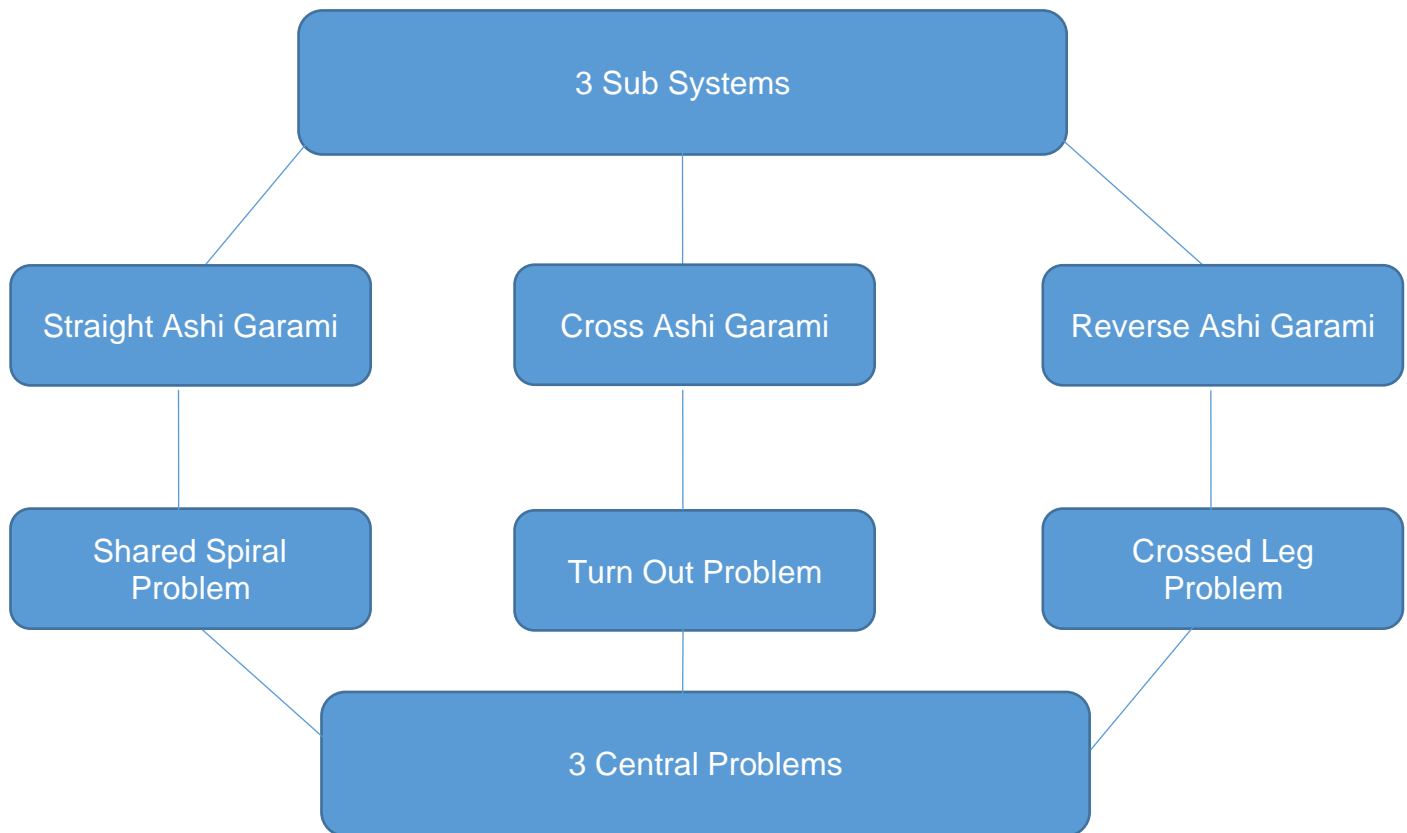
00:00 Introduction

The goal of this video is to give you an overall view of the leg lock game, which some consider to be a new development in Jiu-jitsu.

1:54 Breakdown

6 Essential & Sequential Skills

1. Grip & Inside Position
2. Distance & Connection
3. Breakdown to a Hip
4. Heel Exposure
5. Negate Resistance
6. Breaking



10 Core Principles

1. **Double Trouble Principle** - when attempting a leg lock, the majority of your opponent's resistance is going to come from the opponents **second leg**. Therefore, if you can tie up both of your opponents legs you'll have a much easier time controlling your opponent and getting the finish.
2. **Dilemma Principles** - instead of simply posing a problem for your opponent, you should create a series of linked problems. Each solution to a problem drives your opponent into another challenging problem. Hence, putting your opponent in a dilemma. Make your opponent choose between **a bad option** and **an even worse one**.
3. **Percentage Principle** - there are a ton of leg locks out there, but 90% of our success comes from the **inside heel hook** and the **outside heel hook**.
4. **Central Problem Principle** - for any situation in Jiu-jitsu, there is always at least 1 central problem that motivates the actions of both athletes. Understand what

the central problem is, and you can begin to develop systems of solutions to those problems.

5. **Separation Principle** - make a strong mental separation between the mechanism of controlling and the mechanism of breaking. You must learn to **think about these two as separate forces** in order to increase your effectiveness.
6. **Hierarchy Principle** - the various leg lock positions and submissions are all subject to a hierarchy of effectiveness. **Choose the most effective positions and submissions to win** at the highest levels.
7. **Opposing forces principle** - when going to finish an opponent, you want to make sure that **the force of your Ashi Garami (control) and the force of your heel hook (break) are going in opposing directions.**
8. **Holistic Principle** - the best way to understand leg locking, is to see it as a sequence of events that occur long before a leg entanglement. You must understand the whole process.
9. **Multiple Ashi Principle** - Heel hooking is a multi-step process. We will enact multiple Ashi Garamis in order to accomplish different tasks, which ultimately leads to a submission.
10. **Closed Wedges Over Open Wedges Principles** - John Danaher's favorite leg locking positions involve closed wedges over open wedges.

9:05 - Explication

Most teachers show leg locks as “moves”, John Danaher takes a **systems-based approach**. The most important features of his system based approach are:

1. **Sequential Progression** - start from a neutral position and end at the goal; a leg lock.
2. **Sufficient Complexity** - the system must be complex enough to cover the various contingencies of counters. You must be able to break through resistance and finish your opponent.

10:56 - Independent Thinking

The goal of this instructional is to make you an **independent problem solver**. John Danaher strives to get you thinking in terms of **problems** and **solutions**.

12:15 - Overview

Complexity vs. Simplicity - if a system is too complex, it would be very challenging to do under duress or during live combat situations. If a system is too simple, skilled opponents will be able to counter or escape your advances.

15:20 - Manifestations of Leg Lock System

1st Sub System - Straight Ashi Garami

The most commonly seen leg entanglements involve a variation of a **Straight Ashi Garami**. This means the opponents leg does not cross your center line. There are many variations of the Straight Ashi Garami.



Center line: image a line from the top of your head, straight down to the floor.

2nd Sub System - Cross Ashi Garami

There is another family of leg entanglements where your opponents leg crosses your center line called the **Cross Ashi Garami**. The Cross Ashi Garami also has many variations.

3rd Sub System - Reverse Ashi Garami

Unlike the other two sub systems where you face your opponent, the **Reverse Ashi Garami** has you face in the same direction as your opponent.

18:41 - Grip and Inside Position



6 Essential & Sequential Skills

1. **Grip & Inside Position**
2. Distance & Connection
3. Breakdown to a Hip
4. Heel Exposure
5. Negate Resistance

6. Breaking

What is Inside Position?

When you go to control your opponent's limbs, you can either control from the **inside** or from the **outside**.

Inside control is when you push your opponents limbs from the inside and move them out and away from their center line, **exposing their limb**.

Outside control is when you push your opponents' limb (i.e. their arm) from the outside across their center line, **exposing their back**.



General Rule: almost all of the leg lock entries and attacks that John Danaher demonstrates utilize some form of **inside position**, particularly with the lower body. This means you need to have at least 1 of your feet, inside your opponents' legs to begin the leg lock game. **In general, John prefers 2 feet with inside position to 1.**

Inside Position vs. Inside Control

Example: In a situation where you are on your back with your legs up and your opponent is standing over you...

- **Inside position** is simply having your legs inside his legs without touching your opponent.
- **Inside control** is when you employ a "sticky foot" behind your opponents' knee. This physically controls your opponents' movement.

The goal is to **start with inside position but work towards inside control**.

22:38 - Gripping

Positive vs. Negative Gripping

John Danaher always preaches to his students to do **positive gripping**. This is "gripping for a purpose" where you use grips to enter into attacks.

Negative Gripping is when you negate or break away from your opponents' grips.

Example of Positive Gripping to Enter Legs:

You start in butterfly guard position with your opponent on their knees. Start with double wrist grips → go for a standard arm drag → your opponent will most likely post their leg to prevent the arm drag → you switch to a 2 on 1 grip on the leg → enter into an **Irimi Ashi Garami**.

26:43 - 2-on-1 Gripping

John emphasizes the use of 2-on-1 gripping because it is a simple and effective way to **gain a mechanical advantage**. John encourages his students to use 2 of their limbs to control 1 of their opponent limbs.

3 Main 2-on-1 Grips

1. 2-on-1 on your opponents' wrist with your palms up.
2. 2-on-1 on your opponents' wrist with your palms down.
3. 2-on-1 with one grip on your opponent's wrist and one grip on your opponents elbow.

Idea behind 2-on-1 Gripping

When you grip your opponents' wrist with one hand there is an inherent weak spot; the gap between your thumb and other 4 fingers. If your opponent wishes to break free from your grip, they would need to pull their wrist in the direction of that weakness.

The idea behind 2-on-1 gripping is that your second hand reinforces the weakness of the first hand. You should cover the weak spot with your other hand, thus reinforcing your grip on your opponents' wrist.

Which 2-on-1 Grip Do I Chose?

Whenever you go to grip your opponent, your choice of how you will grip them is determined by their **hand position**.

- **Opponents hands above elbow:** John will employ a 2-on-1 wrist grip in an upwards direction.
- **Opponents hands below elbow:** John will employ a 2-on-1 wrist grip in a downwards direction.

- **Opponents hands in neutral position:** John will employ a 2-on-1 grip on the wrist and just above the elbow.



Drill: Practice switching between the various 2-on-1 grips with your training partner. Start in a neutral position like butterfly guard with your training partner on their knees. Your partner will grab a wrist grip and then you should break their grip (negative grip) and obtain a 2-on-1 grip.

33:25 - Immovable Elbow

One of the strongest connections of the human body, is the connection between your **own elbow and hip**. The power of a 2-on-1 grip comes from your elbow/hip connection, not your hand strength.

Example: When you get a 2-on-1 down grip on the wrist on a standing opponent while seated, you need to bring your elbows to your hips, draw your shoulders forward and hunch over your grip to make it incredibly strong.



Drill: Start seated with a 2-on-1 wrist grip (as described above) on a standing training partner. Have your training partner walk backwards and pull you forward. You should maintain your elbow to hip connection and walk your feet forward on the mat so as to follow the direction of your training partners pull. After a few steps, use 2 “sticky feet” to trip your training partner onto the mat.

39:00 - Push Pull Dynamic

The single easiest way to use grip to generate movement that leads to submission is to use **the Push Pull dynamic**. Repetitive use of the push pull dynamic is the best way to create openings into your opponents’ legs.



Push Pull Dynamic: when you pull your opponents wrist with a 2-on-1 grip, their natural reaction will be to pull back against your grip. When you feel them pull, switch to a pushing action. This will create movement and an off-balancing effect called a **Kuzushi**.

42:38 - Torso Controls

The main ways to control your opponents’ torso is through:

1. Collar and elbow grips

- Great for controlling head
- Good push pull dynamic with collar grip

2. Double underhooks

- One of the strongest pulling grips
- John prefers his athletes to place their hands on their opponents traps and draw their own elbows down to the hips, creating the **immovable elbow effect**.

3. Tight waist grip

- Great pulling grip

4. Double triceps

- Strong pulling grip. John prefers his athletes to grip higher up on the triceps, as it does a good job of controlling the shoulders/torso.

46:22 - Hands Over Shoulders



One of the most important concepts that John stresses is that we must create a pulling action in which **our opponents' hands go over our shoulders/head and on the mat**. (i.e. butterfly guard) This is a subtle skill that is critical for your success.



If you try to elevate your opponent from butterfly guard while they have underhooks, you will have a very hard time elevating your opponent.

Alternatively, if you try to elevate your opponent from butterfly guard with double underhooks as described above, your opponents' hands will go to the mat, **effectively making them weightless**. This will make it easy for you to enter the legs.

You need to position yourself so that your opponents' hands are above your hands before you start to elevate them. You must have a sense of where your opponents' hands are in relation to your shoulders. They should be on top of your shoulders so when you pull them forward and elevate, their hands go to the mat.

52:23 - 2-on-1 Leg

In a seated butterfly guard position, whenever we see our opponent post one leg up, we should employ a 2-on-1 grip on the leg to hold it in place, while you scoot your body/hips into theirs and get into the **Ashi Garami** position.



2-on-1 grip on the leg - 1 grip is below the knee and 1 grip is above the knee. Hold their leg in place → move your closest knee behind their knee → sit back → draw your knees to your chest → **Ashi Garami**.

56:49 - Shin to Shin

What do we do when your opponent puts one foot into inside position?



The first thing we need to do is take care of the danger of your opponents' **knee cut pass**.

→ 2-on-1 pushing grip (with your elbows connected to your hips) on your opponent's knee that is in between your legs → bring your outside leg out wide and then pummel your outside foot in to inside position → take your same side arm and grab their leg wrist deep behind their knee → sit back and extend your leg that was previously shin to shin → **Ashi Garami**.

1:00:51 - Standing Opponent



The central problem when you have a standing opponent while seated in butterfly guard is the **mobility asymmetry problem**. Your opponent is very mobile and fast while you are relatively slow in a seated position. This Shin on Shin strategy dramatically slows a standing opponent.



Shin to Shin: Hook the inside of your opponents' right ankle with the shoelaces of your left foot, creating a **sticky hook**. → Take your left arm and grab wrist deep behind the same leg on the opposite side of the sticky hook. (From the outside in) → connect your elbow to your knee.

Now your opponents leg is controlled from both sides. → Kuzushi → **Ashi Garami**.

1:05:33 - Scoop Gripping

Scoop Grip: underhook on the leg at the knee.

Underhook: traditional underhook on the arm.



The beauty of **scoop gripping** is that you can control the upper leg and lower leg of your opponent with just **one of your arms**. Scoop grips are a **great pulling grip**. You can pull body weight across the mat with this grip. John highly favors scoop grips.

1:11:16 - Ankle Gripping

When you are in a **supine position** (laying down) while you have an opponent standing over you, John recommends you take a 5 finger ankle grip (no thumb) on the closer leg and a sticky hook on the far leg.



Detail: Your forearm should cover the shoelaces of your opponents' foot. You should pull your opponents foot into your hip.

→ Position your left knee (ankle grip side) behind your opponents' knee → Pull both your knee and your sticky hook back towards you. This has an off-balancing **Kuzushi** effect → **Ashi Garami**.

Volume 2

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5:00 - Standing Opponent
7:49 - De La Riva
12:17 - Pummeling Legs Top Position
18:40 - Movement Inside
25:07 - Supine Opponent
32:09 - Hand Post - Leg Pummeling
39:53 - Irimi Ashi
48:48 - Knee and Knee Line
53:54 - Connection Drills
58:05 - Penetration Drills
1:04:13 - Gravity Drills
1:09:08 - Gravity Drill 2
1:14:20 - Gravity Drills 3 Rolling
1:17:43 - Recovering Knee Line

00:00 - Attaining Inside

Attaining **inside position** is fundamental to entering leg lock positions. John recommends working from outside positions and pummeling your legs into inside position.



Example: Start with your opponent in your closed guard (outside control) and work your way to butterfly guard. (inside position)

How do you go from Closed Guard to Butterfly Guard?

John focuses on these 2 steps:

1. Gaining the angle on your opponent

2. Pummeling one leg at a time

When you have someone in your closed guard, start by posting your arms on their shoulders and shrimping your hip out to one side. Once you've gained the angle → pummel one of your legs into inside position. → Shrimp your hip out to the other side and pummel your other leg into inside position. → You will find yourself on your back in butterfly guard (not ideal).



Detail: John recommends you control your opponents triceps and then extend your legs along the floor to go from a supine position to a seated position in butterfly guard.

5:00 - Standing Opponent

Closed Guard with a Standing Opponent



Detail: Whenever you open your guard, you should not leave your hips square to your opponent.

Open Guard → Opponent standing over you → Your right hand will take inside position on your opponents leg and your left hand will take outside position on your opponents other leg → Shrimp your hips out to the left (right hip to the mat) and get your right knee to inside position → Pummel your left leg to inside position and then pummel your right leg → X-Guard. → Reverse the position of your legs (Reverse X-Guard) and then get your hips under your opponent by raising them up over you → Open your legs with just enough room to let your partner fall into an extremely advantageous leg lock position → **Cross Inside Ashi Garami**.

7:49 - De La Riva



Drill: Start yourself in outside positions such as closed guard and then work your way to inside position.



Detail: Using repeated Kuzushis will greatly increase your ability to get to inside position.

→ Start in De La Riva position by taking your left leg around your opponents' leg and placing the shoe laces of your foot to the inside of your opponents thigh → Grab the back of your opponents' ankle with a 5 finger grip with your left hand → Place your right foot behind your opponents knee (inside position). → Punch your left hand through the inside of your opponents leg and grab your own left shin → Off balance your opponent

forward (**kuzushi**) so your opponents hands go to the mat → X-Guard → Reverse X-Guard → **Cross Inside Ashi Garami**.

12:17 Pummeling legs top position

There are 2 main scenarios when you start standing against your opponent.

1. Your opponent may be in a seated position
2. Your opponent may be laying down on their back also known as **supine position**.

There are 3 lines of demarcation that you must be aware of:



1. **Toe Line:** draw a line horizontally from toe to toe
2. **Knee Line:** draw a line horizontally from knee to knee.
3. **Hip Line:** drawn a line horizontally across your hips.

→ Step up to your opponents **toe line** with your left foot. → Post your right hand on your opponents shoulder. → Grip your opponents left hand with your left hand (cross grip) or right hand (2nd choice). → Push your opponents shoulder (kuzushi) while you step your right leg to **inside position**. From here, there are great options for passing and leg entries.

18:40 - Movement Inside

→ Start standing with your opponent in a seated position → take a side step to the left while posting with your right hand on your opponents shoulder, as if to pass their guard. → Your opponent will open their legs to try to prevent your pass → step your right leg into inside position.

→ Start on your knees with your opponent in a butterfly seated guard position → place your left hand on your opponents collar and your right hand on their knee → With a turning motion, open your opponents knees and gain **inside position**.

25:07 - Supine Opponent

There are 3 ideal situations for you when starting standing with an opponent in supine position with feet up.



1. The best is when you have both legs on inside
2. Second best, one leg is on the inside.
3. Last, neither person has inside position.
4. The worst position is to for your opponent to have both legs in inside position.



Drill: → Start standing over your opponent → Give them inside leg position → Have your opponent hook their feet behind both your knees. (Sticky foot) → turn one leg knee first downward while posting on both of your opponents knees. → pummel your leg to inside position → turn your second knee in → pummel your leg to inside position.

If you can only manage to pummel one leg inside, you can use back step entries to get into the **Cross Inside Ashi Garami** or **Reverse Ashi Garami**.



Detail: If your opponent gets a reverse De La Riva position on you, you can do the same leg pummeling trick but to the outside position.

32:09 - Hand Post - Leg Pummeling



Drill: → Start on your knees with your opponent in butterfly guard position → have your opponent rock back and elevate you so your hands are on the mat → bend both your knees and bring your heels to your butt → Keep your feet close together. This prevents your opponent from **entering into your legs** → pummel one leg into inside position on your opponents foot → pummel the second foot. Now you have inside position and **enter into your opponents legs**.

There are variations of this where you can pummel on leg across both of your opponents legs and take the **outside position**. Alternatively, you can pummel just one leg and go for a **knee slide pass**. You can also allow your opponent to get the underhook on your, back step, and enter **Cross Ashi Garami**.

39:52 - Irimi Ashi



The **Irimi Ashi Garami** is how John recommends you initially enter on your opponents legs. It is a great starting point to transition to more advantageous leg lock positions that are suited for submissions.

John compares the **Irimi Ashi Garami** to a **jab** in boxing. Most of your leg lock positions will come off your “**jab**”.

In the Irimi Ashi Garami position, one of your legs is on the inside of your opponents legs and one is on the outside. Your outside foot should be placed firmly into your

opponents hip with your foot pointed outwards while your inside foot can either go to the straight buttock position or cross buttock position.

John generally recommends the straight buttock position so that your knee and ankle lock over each other.



Detail: Generally, you want to favor scissoring your legs (think about the motion of pedaling a bicycle) in the Irimi Ashi Garami position rather than squeezing them. Squeezing them leads to fatigue.



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48:48 - Knee and Knee Line



The knee line is the straight line that joins your two knees together. When playing the heel hook game, you want to keep your opponents knee **well within your knee line**.

me excellent at leg locks by starting in double seated position.